

Settling in at kids & co daycare centres

Principle¹:

From the point of view of bonding theory, settling a child into day care is a crucial time not just for the child, but also for the parents, the group of children as a whole, and the carers. It is an important foundation for the forthcoming period in the child's development. It is therefore worth approaching with care, and allowing the child to become used to day care slowly and gradually. Experience shows that children who have been allowed to settle in slowly, in a well-structured way, adjust more quickly, and feel secure and comfortable.

The settling-in period concludes once the child has built up a relationship with their carer, and allows themselves to be soothed and comforted by them. More time must be allowed if the child has difficulty letting go.

We pay particular attention to the following:

- The settling-in period is structured individually in accordance with the child's needs.
- The settling-in period is spread across **consecutive days and generally lasts two weeks**, irrespective of the number of days of care agreed for the future.
- An attempt to separate parent and child is made after the **4th day**.
- During the settling-in period, the child will generally be looked after by the same carer all the time. They will welcome the child, and say goodbye at the end of their stay.
- During the settling-in period, the carer responsible for the child will be in regular contact with the parents and will report on the well-being of the child.

The aim of the settling-in period is to build mutual trust between the child and the carers, and between the parents and the carers.

Importance to the child:

- Going to day care is an enormous adjustment for any child. They are leaving their familiar environment, are without a parent, as their primary attachment figure, for several hours, and must interact with new people who, at first, they do not know.
- They must also gain new confidence, be receptive to other children, to a new environment and to a new daily routine, and must get used to the new situation.
- The child should be offered as much stability, security and comfort as possible.

Important note:

- If there is a gap between the initial settling-in period and normal attendance, owing to holidays or illness, for example, a few additional days will be planned in to allow the child to familiarize themselves with day care once again.
- Children must stay at day care for the length of time agreed with the carer. This is important so that the child can be prepared for their stay, and to allow the carer to organize and plan effectively.

¹ Extract from the full Kids & Co Educational Concept, Section 1.2

The settling-in process:

The carer will contact the parents at a sufficiently early stage to agree with them the first day of the settling-in stage.

Day 1 The parents come to daycare with the child. The first visit lasts between 90 and 120 minutes. The carer will show the parents around the centre, introduce the care team, and give the parents an impression of the daily routine. It is particularly important for them to discuss details of the child's habits, such as sleeping, eating, any allergies or illnesses, their development, play, etc.

These in-depth discussions on the first day give the carer the opportunity to meet the child and their parents, and get to know them.

Day 2 One parent accompanies the child to daycare for a visit of approximately 90–120 minutes. The parent participates with the child in everyday activities, as the child gets to know the routine and the group of children.

Day 3 The child again comes to day care with one parent. The carer will spend more time with the child as the parent remains in the background.

Day 4 The parent once again participates in everyday day care activities with the child. If the child appears open and thus responds positively to the carer, the parent can try for the first time to leave for a short while.

The parent says goodbye to the child and leaves for a short time (roughly between 10 and 30 minutes, but no longer). It is very important that the parent says a proper goodbye to the child and explains that they are coming back. Slipping away is very unsettling to the child, who will then lose trust. It is very important when settling a child into day care that their relationship of trust with their parents is not disrupted. Rituals can make separation easier for the child. It can help for the parents to leave a familiar item belonging to themselves or to the child at daycare, such as a dummy, toy, or something that smells of the parents.

The parent then returns after the agreed period of time. The carer will give the parent feedback on how the child managed in their absence. If the child responded well, the time spent at day care can slowly be increased in the days that follow.

From day 5 Time spent at day care is slowly increased. The child is gently familiarized with shared mealtimes and sleeping while at day care.

In the last day of the settling-in phase, the child will be able to spend a short day at day care, from around 9.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Many thanks for your cooperation!